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SUBJECT: JUNE 12 IS LIKELY DATE FOR IRELAND'S LISBON TREATY

REFERENDUM

REF: A. DUBLIN 166
[1](#)B. DUBLIN 44

[1](#)1. (SBU) Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern has indicated that Ireland's European Union Reform (Lisbon) Treaty referendum (Ref B) will most likely be held on Thursday, June 12. Speaking in the Dail (Irish Parliament) on April 2, shortly after announcing his resignation from office effective May 6, Ahern said that while the referendum date had not yet been formalized, June 12 seemed to be the most appropriate date. All political parties welcomed the announcement, which will allow them to plan their referendum campaigns. A formal decision on the date is expected next week.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Earlier in the day, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dermot Ahern introduced the 28th Amendment to the Constitution Bill that paves the constitutional path for the Treaty referendum to be held. Ahern stated that the Taoiseach's decision to retire on May 6 would not affect the Government's referendum campaign, which, he said, will highlight the many positive reasons why Ireland should vote "Yes." He stressed that a "Yes" vote would safeguard Irish interests, such as corporate taxation, equality of member states, and security and defense; and that a "Yes" vote would generate political goodwill within the EU. A "No" vote, he added, would be very negatively interpreted by important international political and economic partners.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Comment: In his sudden resignation announcement on April 2 (Ref A), the Taoiseach said that he did not want the furor surrounding his personal finances to cast a shadow on the outcome of the Treaty referendum vote. The fear of treaty supporters that voters would vote "No" in the Lisbon Treaty referendum to express their dissatisfaction with the Taoiseach have now been allayed and the way seems clear for the referendum to proceed on schedule.

FOLEY